

Appn. No. 10/077,628
Reply to Office Action of 11/24/03

REMARKS

Claims 1-15 were presented for examination. The Office Action indicates that:

(a) Claims 1-4, 6, 7 and 11-15 were rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by US Patent No. 4,618,198 to Dale et al.

(b) Claim 5 was rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over the Dale et al. Patent in view of US Patent No. 5,785,544 to Linden et al.

(c) Claims 8-10 and 15 were rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over the Dale et al. Patent in view of US Patent No. 4,691,080 to Reinhart et al.

Claims 1-12 are presented for reconsideration. Claim 1 has been amended as discussed below. Claims 2-12 are unchanged from the claims presently under consideration. Claims 13-15 have been canceled. It is respectfully submitted that the amendment does not introduce new matter into the application and that the application as amended satisfies the statutory requirements of 35 USC 102(b) and 35 USC 103(a). Accordingly, reconsideration of this application in view of the above amendments and the following remarks is requested.

It is noted that the Applicant has invented an electrical connector for conductors (e.g., of thermocouples and field cables) that may be used as a field-installable replacement in a hot,

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highly radioactive environment around a nuclear reactor pressure vessel. As is discussed in the specification at page 2, the Applicant's connector is an improvement over compression fittings such as the fittings disclosed by US Patent No. 4,618,198 to Dale and US Patent No. 5,301,213 to Linden. The size of such fittings causes mechanical interference problems with the installation of CET (Core Exit Thermocouple) protective sleeves over the connectors. Such fittings may rotate and become loose from the twisting of the protective sleeves as a result of these interferences and/or from improperly restraining the fitting during connector mating and demating.

Referring for convenient reference to Figure 1 of the specification, the Applicant's electrical connector comprises a first elongated tubular housing section (14) for attaching to a cable's sheath and an abutting second elongated tubular housing section (16) for mating with another connector. The Applicant's first housing section (14) has tubular ends with different diameters and an integrally formed intermediate part. The end with a reduced diameter is designed to be metallurgically attached, preferably by brazing, to a sheath (10). As may be seen in Figure 1, the end with a reduced diameter and the intermediate part have about the same thickness. Claim 1 has been amended to recite this structure. Advantageously, the Applicant's first housing section is smaller than equivalent portions of compression fittings and is less likely to interfere with the installation and/or removal of

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the CET protective sleeves or to be loosened by them. In addition, the Applicant's first housing section is not as heavy as equivalent portions of compression fittings exemplified by Dale and Linden or connectors exemplified by US Patent No. 4,691,080 to Reinhart et al.

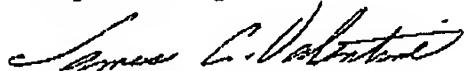
It is respectfully submitted that the Dale Patent does not disclose or suggest the Applicant's connector. The first housing section hypothesized by the Examiner including a seal cap 77 (Examiner's 89) and a seal body 75 (Examiner's 34) are not integral but are two separate parts. In addition, the seal cap is not designed to be metallurgically attached to the sheath. The compression fitting is heavier than the Applicant's first housing section.

Thus, it is respectfully submitted that Claim 1 and its dependent Claims 2-12 are patentable and that the application satisfies the statutory requirements of the statute. Accordingly, allowance of these claims is respectfully solicited.

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The Commissioner is authorized to charge any additional fees required by 37 CFR 1.16 or 37 CFR 1.17 as a result of this Reply to Deposit Account No. 50-0947.

Respectfully submitted,



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